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STATUS REPORT

IMPAIRED DRIVING PROGRAM

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1990-91

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SOLICITOR GENERAL

IMPAIRED DRIVING STATUS REPORT

(1990 - 91)

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I INTRODUCTION

The Department of the Solicitor General, with responsibility for the Impaired Driving Countermeasures Committee and its mandate, in the areas of law enforcement, driver management and corrections continued to coordinate and direct the impaired driving initiatives in Alberta under the direction and sponsorship of the Government of Alberta. The program has now been in operation for three years.

The following status report represents the progress that has taken place in the third year of a three year strategic plan to reduce the incidence of impaired driving in Alberta. During the third year of operation, emphasis was placed on monitoring existing programs, evaluating effectiveness and expanding into areas that have proven to be effective countermeasures. The original premise of providing a diverse, comprehensive and integrated strategy to reduce the incidence of impaired driving continues to be the underlying theme to the programs that are further developed.

II ENFORCEMENT

A. The Checkstop Program

1. Checkstop Minivans

The 17 Checkstop minivans which are located in communities across the province continue to serve as "moving billboards" for the Checkstop Program. The vans are highly visible and provide an ongoing presence at Checkstop locations, shopping malls, schools, exhibitions and fairs across the province. Additionally, three Checkstop Mobile Breath Alcohol Testing Vans, which allow the police to conduct roadside breathalyser testing, are situated in Edmonton, Calgary and Lethbridge.

2. Checkstop Advertising/Public Awareness Campaigns

a) Billboards

During the 1990-91 fiscal year, the City of Edmonton continued to erect billboard signs, using various Checkstop slogans, at strategic locations throughout the city. The City of Calgary made use of electronic billboard space throughout the city to display Checkstop messages during the 1990-91 fiscal year. The Checkstop slogans utilized in billboard campaigns in Edmonton and in Calgary were "The Heat Is On", "The Party's Over" and "Sooner or Later You Will be Stopped".

As in previous years, an effort was made during the 1990-91 fiscal year to target sporting events because of the number of individuals involved and the amount of alcohol consumed at these events. The Checkstop slogans noted above continued to appear on signs at the Northlands Coliseum and the Calgary Saddledome and Racetrack throughout the year. Checkstop messages also continued to appear at both the Edmonton Trappers and Calgary Cannons baseball fields, where special "Checkstop Nights" were also held in order to distribute information and relevant print material. Additionally, negotiations with the Edmonton Eskimos were successful during the 1990-91 fiscal year and a Checkstop message appeared in the football stadium along with various public service announcements broadcast throughout each home game.

b) Bus Signs

Checkstop advertising boards continued to appear on buses in Edmonton and Calgary.

c) Checkstop Highway Signs

During the 1990-91 fiscal year, Checkstop highway signs were erected at the entrances to Hinton, Fort Saskatchewan, Taber, Peace River, Spruce Grove, Hobbema Four Nations Reserve and the town of Banff. These new signs, along with existing signs in other provincial locations, have been placed in strategic locations to promote awareness of the Checkstop Program among residents and visitors to the province.

d) Exhibitions/Trade Shows/Conferences

Summer Checkstop exhibits were held during the 1990-91 fiscal year at the Calgary Stampede, Edmonton Klondike Days, Lethbridge Whoop Up Days, Medicine Hat Exhibition and Stampede and Red Deer Westerner Exhibition.

Displays also continued to be held at various events throughout the year, including Gala '90 in Calgary (April 1990).

e) Checkstop Posters

New Checkstop posters using the slogans "The Heat Is On", "The Party's Over" and "Sooner or Later You Will Be Stopped" were developed, printed and distributed during the 1990-91 fiscal year. Copies of the three posters were made available to junior and senior high schools, post secondary facilities, all police detachments and motor vehicle offices. The posters reflect Checkstop themes by depicting the consequences of drinking and driving.

f) Checkstop Mascot

A Checkstop mascot was developed and "brought to life" during the 1990-91 fiscal year. "Chuckie Checkstop" made his debut at the Edmonton Klondike Days Exhibition in July 1990 and was well received by children and adults alike. He has attended several community and sporting events to disseminate Checkstop information and promotional material.

3. Police Coordinators

The Department continued to fund police coordinators in Calgary, Edmonton, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat and for the RCMP. In addition to their responsibilities of developing enforcement programs, combating impaired driving and completing community presentations to promote awareness of the issue, the police coordinators assisted in providing guidance in the implementation of new initiatives (Legislative Initiatives) and support in the expansion of existing programs (Designated Driver Program).

The duties undertaken by the police coordinators are unique; they contain elements of traffic enforcement, crime prevention and program development. Specific tasks include:

a) enhancing community awareness of the impaired driving issue through school and other community displays and presentations;

b) developing recommendations to enhance the current means of detecting and apprehending impaired drivers;

c) maintaining a close working relationship with the Department of the Solicitor General and providing technical expertise, guidance and support, when applicable.

B. Vehicle Immobilization

The Vehicle Immobilization Program continues to operate in several locations across the province, including Calgary, Edmonton, Lacombe, Medicine Hat and Lethbridge. The use of vehicle immobilization devices to combat impaired driving is unique to Alberta. A device is installed for a maximum of 24 hours, on the vehicle belonging to a person charged with impaired driving to prevent the person from recovering the vehicle and committing another impaired driving offence. The Vehicle Immobilization Program continues to be positively received by the public. Additionally, police authorities where the program is operating note that the impact of seeing an immobilization device on a vehicle serves as a deterrent, because it is a visible reminder that the law is and will continue to be enforced.

In addition to maintaining and monitoring the program in locations previously noted, the Department of the Solicitor General worked closely with the RCMP to encourage the use of the Vehicle Immobilization Program in rural areas. A pilot project to evaluate the program's applicability for the RCMP was developed and implemented in September 1990 in Red Deer and St. Albert. Results of the pilot project are forthcoming and it is expected further negotiations will be necessary prior to the expansion of the Vehicle Immobilization Program to rural Alberta.

C. Ignition Interlock

In March, 1990, a contract was signed between Alcohol Countermeasures Systems Corporation and the Department of the Solicitor General introducing the Ignition Interlock Program to Alberta. A pilot project specifically targeted to third time offenders commenced operation in Edmonton in April 1990 and in Calgary in August 1990. The program was expanded to include second time offenders in October 1990.

The Driver Control Board may order the use of an alcohol sensing device (ignition interlock) on the vehicle of a previously convicted impaired driver, as a condition of licence reinstatement. This may occur after both the court imposed suspension and the provincial suspension under the Motor Vehicle Administration Act expire or after the court imposed suspension has been completed but before the provincial suspension expires. This new technology requires that drivers, pass a breath alcohol test prior to starting their vehicles.

To date, 108 individuals have been approved to participate in the Ignition Interlock Program, and at the end of March 1991 there were 39 persons participating in the program. During the 1990-91 fiscal year, 13 individuals successfully completed the program, two people were revoked and two people were refused access to the program.

Plans are currently underway to expand the eligibility criteria for the program to include first time offenders. Additionally, negotiations began with Transport Canada to develop a long term strategy for the ongoing evaluation of the program.

D. Administrative Licence Suspension

An Administrative Licence Suspension Program has been in effect since August 1, 1989. The Registrar of Motor Vehicles continued to immediately refer all cases of driver's charged with impaired driving causing death or bodily harm to the Driver Control Board for the Board to determine whether to suspend driving privileges pending court decisions.

During the 1990-91 fiscal year, a total of 88 cases were reviewed by the Driver Control Board, so 55 drivers had their licences suspended pending the outcome of the court proceedings, 28 did not result in licence suspension and five drivers had previous suspensions, so no action was taken.

Plans are underway to expand the Administrative Licence Suspension Program to include all alcohol related Criminal Code offences. A planning committee was formed during the 1990-91 fiscal year to evaluate and make recommendations for the expansion of the program. An implementation strategy which includes developing appropriate provincial legislation, revising current practices and formulating an extensive communications plan is currently being finalized. It is anticipated that the Administrative Licence Suspension Program will be fully operational in the fall of 1991.

E. Random Breath Testing

Random breath testing, as practised in parts of Australia, England and Scandinavia allows police authorities to request preliminary breath samples from any and all drivers they stop. Police authorities need not suspect inebriation prior to requesting a breath sample. This is not the practice in Canada or the United States where police must have cause to request a breath sample.

During the 1990-91 fiscal year, a working committee was struck with representatives from the Departments of the Solicitor General and Attorney General and various provincial police authorities to evaluate this initiative and develop an implementation strategy. Various options for the development of a Random Breath Testing Program have been explored and it is expected that a pilot project will be operational by the summer of 1991.

F. Suspended Driver Vehicle Seizure

In an effort to reduce the number of individuals who continue to drive while their licence is suspended, the Department of the Solicitor General has explored the development of a Suspended Driver Vehicle Seizure Program. Operational in a number of American jurisdictions and in the province of Manitoba, this program calls for the seizure of vehicles operated by a driver with a suspended licence. Vehicles are usually seized for periods of up to thirty days. This program relays the message that driving while suspended will not be tolerated and further, that strict enforcement will ensure adherence to the law.

A working committee was struck during the 1990-91 fiscal year to further develop and implement this program. It is expected that the program will be fully operational by the fall of 1991.

III EDUCATION/PREVENTION

A. Impaired Driving Video

The twenty-five minute video, "The Party's Over" continues to be shown in junior and senior high schools in the province. The video was also seen by some 100,000 new drivers during the 1990-91 fiscal year as part of the licensing process. It continues to be positively received.

B. Impaired Driving Conference

The "International Congress On Drinking and Driving - Effective Strategies For The 90's" was held in Edmonton from March 28 - 30, 1990. The exchange of ideas that occurred was beneficial to the Department of the Solicitor General and others who attended the event. As a result, a collection of papers was edited and published in a book. The published work has been made available to all speakers who attended the congress (55) and on a limited basis to anyone who has requested a copy (545).

C. Awards Program

The intent of the Department of the Solicitor General Awards Program is to provide tangible symbols of appreciation and to increase community involvement in reducing impaired driving. The Awards Program includes recognition plaques, certificates of appreciation and the Solicitor General's Award of Merit. Awards are presented to citizens or groups involved either in Department programs or independant initiatives.

Thirty-eight awards were presented during the 1990-91 fiscal year. Plaques were awarded to the Designated Driver Program's corporate sponsors, Coca-Cola, Shell and Labatts, in appreciation of their financial support. The Alberta Restaurant and Food Services Association, the Alberta Hotel Association, the Alberta Motor Association and the Alberta Teacher's Association also received plaques for their efforts in soliciting industry-wide support for the program. Additionally, certificates of appreciation were presented to 32 licensed establishments in Alberta for their participation in the Designated Driver Program.

D. Contract For Life

The "Contract For Life" is a contract usually struck between parents and their children and sets out rules of conduct by which each party must abide with respect to drinking and driving. For example, if teenagers are at a party and require rides home, they may contact their parents. Parents agree to provide the ride home without scolding or punishing the teenager for their impairment at the time of the incident but have an opportunity to discuss the situation at a later date.

Copies of the wallet size card continued to be displayed in attractive stands at Motor Vehicle Division offices, junior and senior high schools, post secondary institutions, driving schools and medical facilities across the province.

IV COMMUNITY ACTION

A. Impaired Driving Countermeasures Committee

During the 1990-91 fiscal year, the Impaired Driving Countermeasures Committee (IDCC) continued to act in an advisory capacity to the Solicitor General. Other government departments, community groups, private sector corporations and the public at large are represented on the IDCC.

The IDCC continues to ensure:

1. A coordinated multi-faceted approach to program development and pubic awareness campaigns;

2. Government departments and private community groups involved in the prevention of impaired driving provide a consistent, and constant anti-drinking and driving message;

3. The efficient use of financial resources in highly visible impaired driving campaigns; and

4. The development of innovative campaigns and/or programs aimed at reducing impaired driving.

B. Grant Funding

Two forms of grant funding were made available to community groups during the 1990-91 fiscal year. These are:

1. Department of Solicitor General Grants

One time grants may be made available to community groups, or non-profit organizations engaged in organized volunteer initiatives, to prevent impaired driving in their communities. The grants facilitate the delivery of local activities which discourage drinking and driving.

2. Health and Welfare Grants

The "Community Action Program On Impaired Driving" is a cooperative effort among all provincial and territorial governments and Health and Welfare Canada. The goal of the program is to reduce social acceptability of impaired driving. All applications for grants must be consistent with health promotion priorities which support self care, mutual aid and the improvement of the environment.

Individuals and groups are encouraged to find innovative ways to reduce society's acceptance of impaired driving. Priority is given to projects that involve local people and organizations. This grant program is administered by the Impaired Driving Countermeasures Committee on behalf of Health and Welfare Canada.

3. Grants Issued

During the l990-9l fiscal year, community grants were provided to:

a) The University of Alberta Health Services to enhance their existing peer education program which provides students with information on several health topics including drinking and driving and incorporate the use of educational theatre in program delivery.

b) The Calgary General Hospital to:

   i) assist in the design, development and distribution of a PARTY (Prevention of Alcohol and Risk Related Trauma in Youth) Program Manual to be pilot tested and used by other hospitals in communities throughout Alberta.

   ii) assist in the design and completion of the overall evaluation study of the program in deterring teens from drinking and driving.

c) Cytronics Technologies Incorporated for start-up funding for the !gnition Interlock Program.

d) The St. Albert Paramedics and Firefighters to print and distribute posters with the slogan, "If you need a reason not to drink and drive, ask us. We had more than 20,000 reasons last year alone."

e) The Alberta Restaurant and Food Association to produce a video and a training manual to accompany the Server Intervention Program to help servers reduce alcohol related risks while maintaining and enhancing profits.

f) The Peace River Alcohol and Drug Abuse Centre to develop an interactive software package for drivers which provides information and demonstrates skills needed to make responsible drinking and driving decisions.

g) People Against Impaired Drivers to test pilot the victim impact panel concept for those individuals convicted of impaired driving.

h) The Paul Band Reserve to deliver a teen peer counselling program on the reserve.

i) The University of Alberta Hospitals to fund an injury prevention symposium.

j) Mount Royal College for the development of a "Safe Ride Home" manual.

C. Designated Driver Program

The Designated Driver Program continued to operate and expand during the 1990-91 fiscal year. A marketing plan to assist in this expansion was developed and implemented in April 1990.

The two liaison coordinators for licensed establishments in Calgary and Edmonton continued to monitor and promote the program in licensed establishments through the year. They consistently reported that the program was well received by the public and the service industry. Participation in the program to date remains consistently high.

Developments that occurred in the expansion of the Designated Driver Program during the 1990-91 fiscal year include:

1. Documentation necessary to secure trademark/copyrights for the Designated Driver Program logo were submitted in March 1990. Approval was obtained in late 1990;

2. A four week poster campaign including street ads in Edmonton (11), Calgary (11), Red Deer (1), Medicine Hat (2), Lethbridge (2), Lloydminister (1), Vegreville (1), and Camrose (1), promoting the Designated Driver Program commenced May 1990. Hook Outdoor Advertising donated a 10% discount toward the regular cost of this campaign, and in addition, donated the space for 20 street ads, 25 transit ads and one superboard;

3. All major corporate sponsors renewed their financial commitment to the Designated Driver Program for year two of operation;

4. A Designated Driver Program Awards luncheon was held in June 1990 which recognized 32 licensed establishments and the program's corporate sponsors for their outstanding effort in promoting the program;

5. A radio campaign entitled "It Pays To Be A Designated Driver" was developed in the summer of 1990 and began to air for one year prior to the Thanksgiving long weekend. A "Spotter's Program" was attached to the radio campaign which had radio personalities visit licensed establishments and awarding prizes to designated drivers, managers, and servers who promote the program. The prizes were donated by the corporate sponsors;

6. In August 1990, a Designated Driver Awareness Week was held in all Alberta Liquor Control Board (ALCB) outlets throughout the week. ALCB staff wore Designated Driver Program lapel pins, passed out information and promoted the program;

7. Various surveys were completed throughout the year with the service industry, the public and the ALCB to gauge participation and acceptance of the program;

8. A brochure which provides an overview of the program and invites participation was prepared and mailed out to 1.8 million motor vehicle registrants commencing November 1990;

9. As part of their ongoing support and sponsorship of the Designated Driver Program, Coca-Cola placed the Designated Driver logo on 250,000 cases of their diet Coca-Cola and Coca-Cola Classic products during the 1990 Christmas season;

10. Labatts developed "danglers" promoting the Designated Driver Program which were hung in all ALCB outlets during the Christmas season;

11. The ALCB agreed to advertise a Designated Driver message on electronic boards located in various outlets across the province;

12. Plans commenced for the production and broadcast of a Designated Driver television commercial. Production was completed in February 1991 and the commercial began airing on a cooperative basis with Alberta broadcasters in March 1991. The commercial will be shown across the province for one year.

D. Tagged...For Life

Sponsored by the University of Alberta Hospitals and the Department of the Solicitor General, the Tagged...For Life Program takes selected individuals from the Edmonton area, aged 16 to 24, who have their licence suspended, through an intensive day at the hospital.

This program began as a pilot project in December 1988 and terminated in June 1990. Upon completion, the pilot project had exposed 400 people to the program. In conjunction with referrals to the program, a control group was established to evaluate the effects of the Tagged...For Life Program. The evaluation process will be completed in late summer 1991.

E. Corporate/Community Involvement

A brochure entitled "Take Stock" was developed and printed in February 1990 to provide organizations with key strategies to reduce the incidence of impaired driving among staff. The brochure was made available to the community according to a distribution plan and reaction to the brochure was positive.

F. Safe Ride Home

This program was developed to provide safe rides home for persons faced with possible impaired driving situations, either from private house parties or from licensed establishments. Some groups implementing the program also offer safe rides for persons who are over tired or have medical problems. Some groups offer the program during festive occasions, and others do so year round. User costs range from free to a subsidized taxi fare to a yearly set fee plus call out charges.

A briefing paper outlining program use locally, nationally and internationally was printed. Negotiations with community groups to further develop a provincial project have begun.

G. Report An Impaired Driver (RAID)

The objective of this program is to provide special procedures for private citizens to report impaired drivers, to police agencies while the offence is in progress.

A study of existing RAID programs in Alberta was completed in May 1989. A paper outlining other similar programs in Canada and the United States has been developed to determine the necessary components for a successful provincial program. This paper was reviewed and as a result, plans were undertaken during the 1990-91 fiscal year to develop and implement a RAID Program. In conjunction with a "Report A Suspended Driver" Program, the RAID Program will be implemented by summer 1991.

H. Native Programming

Community grants were provided to native groups to develop impaired driving programs (see Grant Section). Additionally, two Checkstop highway signs were provided to the Hobbema Four Nations Reserve to denote their community as a Checkstop Community.

Several meetings were organized with native groups to assist with program development or expansion. Letters were also sent advising them of the grant program and its eligibility criteria. It is expected that as awareness of the Department's initiatives and grant program increase, so will the participation of native groups.

In October l990 the Department of the Solicitor General entered into a six month contract with Nayo-Skan Health Services to provide an impaired driving awareness program for kindergarten to grade l2 students on the Hobbema Reserve. Upon completion of the contract, Nayo-Skan Health Services will prepare a manual to assist other reserves in developing and implementing similar programs. The contract terminated on March 3l, l99l and an evaluation is expected shortly.

V. PUBLIC AWARENESS

A. Brochures

In addition to the brochures previously mentioned, work began on two brochures in support of the Report An Impaired Driver Program (RAID) and the Driving Under Suspension Program. Both brochures are scheduled for distribution following the program launch in summer l99l.

B. Publications

Several magazine articles were written, on the Department's impaired driving initiatives, during the l990-9l fiscal year, for national publications including Impact, Law Now, West World and RCMP Quarterly. This cost efficient method of reaching colleagues and the public will continue to be used.

C. Television

In addition to news conferences, introducing new programs, time was secured on local talk shows to highlight the Department's impaired driving initiatives. Special appearances were also made as part of the launch of the Designated Driver Program's television commercial.

D. Radio

Radio advertising was used in the introduction of the Designated Driver Program. Radio talk shows augmented general awareness for several of the Department's Impaired Driving Initiatives.

E. Print Material Advertising

Advertising was purchased in conjunction with editorial space in the Prairie Hotelier and CKER radio magazines.

F. Alberta Liquor Control Board

Electronic message monitors are available in 22 Alberta Liquor Control Board outlets across the province. These monitors provide specific messages on a 24 hour, year round basis. As noted earlier, these boards now display a Designated Driver Program message.

VI RESEARCH

A. General Research

General research was undertaken in order to describe countermeasures, evaluate their effectiveness and make recommendations regarding the implementation of each initiative. Research was completed during the 1990-91 fiscal year on topic areas including zero tolerance, the alcoholic or chronic offender, and suspended driving.

B. Public Survey

During the 1989-90 fiscal year, a public survey was completed to assess Alberta drivers' knowledge of impaired driving and their attitude towards possible countermeasures. Entitled, "Impaired Driving in Alberta: A Survey of The Province's Drivers", the report was prepared as a result of the survey of 3,000 drivers randomly selected from the computerized files of the Motor Vehicle Division. The report was printed in March 1990. A new survey was completed in August, 1990 and the results will be incorporated into an evaluation report also completed during the 1990-91 fiscal year on the Impaired Driving Program.

C. Impaired Driving Statistical Analysis

A five year trend analysis of impaired driving in Alberta was prepared by the Impaired Driving Countermeasures Committee, with the cooperation and assistance of Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Ccommission, Transportation and Utilities, Attorney General, Alberta Liquor Control Board, police services and the Department of the Solicitor General. Entitled, "Impaired Driving in Alberta: A Five Year Perspective (1984 - 1988)", the report provides analysis in key areas, including alcohol consumption, number of traffic collisions resulting in injuries and fatalities, number of persons charged, types of punishment and the social and economic consequences of impaired driving. Additionally, a profile of the impaired driver is outlined. This report was printed in March 1990, and has since been updated to reflect 1989 statistics. The figures for 1990 are currently being compiled.

D. Impaired Driving Evaluation Report

In cooperation with the Internal Audit Branch of the Department of the Solicitor General, an evaluation of the Impaired Driving Program took place during the 1990-91 fiscal year. Results are expected in April 1991.